

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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MEMORANDUM FOR

ADMIRAL V. P. DEPOIX  
EDWARD W. PROCTOR  
RAY CLINE

FROM:

A. W. Marshall *Acum*

SUBJECT:

Presentation on Soviet Long-Range Strategy

**\*NSC Declassification/Release Instructions on File\***

The NSCIC Working Group is developing a list of topics of special interest to high-level policymakers. For each topic, the Working Group plans to prepare a short paper describing its importance and presenting the issues of key concern to consumers. The NSCIC should review and approve the topics, which would then provide guidance to intelligence as to high-level needs.

To prepare the topics a team has been formed consisting of members of the Working Group under my chairmanship. The team feels it is essential to know the past, present and future work of the community on each topic being considered and to have an understanding of the key aspects of each topic from the viewpoint of intelligence producers. This should avoid duplication of previous intelligence efforts and help the Working Group as a whole to focus on the critical elements of each topic. The team believes that informal presentations on each topic by the agencies of the community should provide them with the necessary background information.

Initially the team is considering preparing statements of consumer needs on four major issues:

- The nature and direction of Soviet long-range strategy.
- International implications of a failure to resolve current monetary and trade issues.
- The national security implications of the energy crisis.
- The implications of alternative outcomes to negotiations on the Law of the Sea.

The first topic being studied is the policy-level's interest in the Soviets' long-range strategy. The importance of the topic is obvious, but defining the term "strategy" and outlining the Soviets' strategy in particular is, of course, extremely difficult. The team views strategy as the set of broad objectives which have been implicitly or explicitly set by the Soviets and the major policies and actions contemplated or being executed to facilitate pursuit of these objectives. As only a sample of the major questions about Soviet strategy with which the policy-level may be concerned, the team has listed the following:

-- Do the Soviets have a comprehensive, stated strategy? Has Soviet strategy changed recently? What changes may occur in the coming decade? To what extent do these changes reflect fundamental shifts in the Soviet system and manner of conducting international relations? To what extent are these apparent changes in policy largely tactical? What evidence do we have?

-- What is the gap between the Soviets' desired strategic objectives and the achievable ones? What factors constrain or facilitate the Soviets' pursuit of their strategy (e.g., individuals, interest groups, organizational performance, influences of other nations or groups of nations)?

-- In strategic policy considerations what is their view of:

- The role of the PRC?

- The nature of competition between the U.S. and USSR? What are the perceived areas of comparative advantage and disadvantage?

- The role of Western Europe? The Middle East? The less developed nations?

-- Is there a convergence in their view in U.S. and Soviet military strategy and thinking?

-- In the Soviets' view, what are the major risks, opportunities, and rewards in their relationships with other nations? What constraints do they perceive?

-- How flexible is their strategy?

Before formulating a comprehensive statement of these and other questions, the team would like to receive a presentation from the agencies outlining the present state of the work on Soviet long-range strategy. In particular, the team would appreciate answers to the following questions:

-- What past, present and future work addresses this issue?

-- To intelligence, what are the essential characteristics of Soviet long-term strategy now and in the future?

- Upon what issues is there general agreement?

- Upon what issues are there disagreements?

- Upon what issues is there a high level of uncertainty or speculation?

The team would like to receive this presentation by the end of July. Outlines of the other topics similar to this one will be prepared prior to additional requests for briefings.